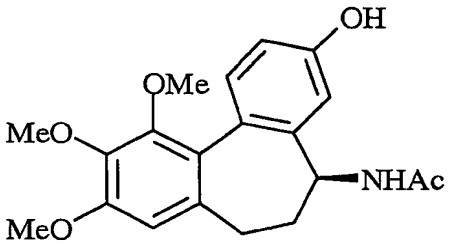
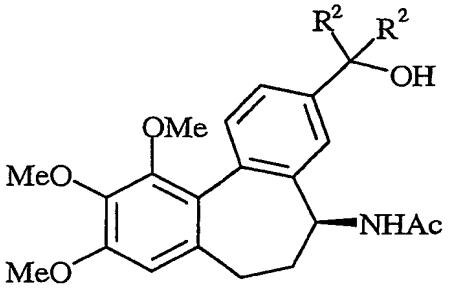
CLAIMS

1. A process for the preparation of ZD6126 Phenol:



ZD6126 Phenol

from a ZD6126 Alcohol of formula **(II)**:



(II)

wherein R^2 are each independently hydrogen, C_{1-4}alkyl or aryl which comprises:
reacting said ZD6126 Alcohol of formula **(II)** with an acid catalyst and an oxidising agent.

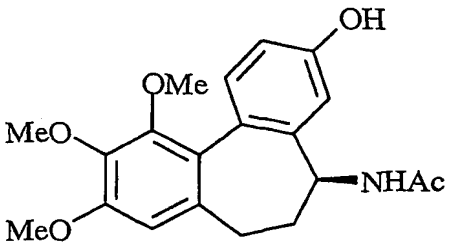
2. A process according to claim 1 wherein the acid catalyst is an sulfonic acid.

3. A process according to claim 1 wherein the acid catalyst is methanesulfonic acid.

4. A process according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the reaction is carried out in the presence of a solvent selected from an aromatic solvent, an ester and an ether.

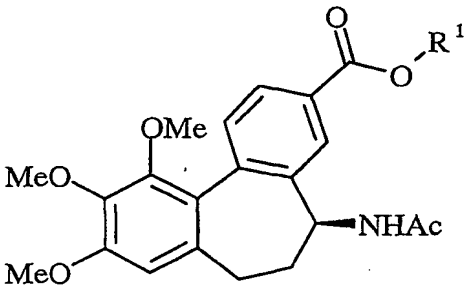
5. A process according to any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein the reaction is carried out in an aromatic solvent selected from toluene and chlorobenzene, or a mixture of two or more of said solvents.

6. A process for the preparation of ZD6126 Phenol:



ZD6126 Phenol

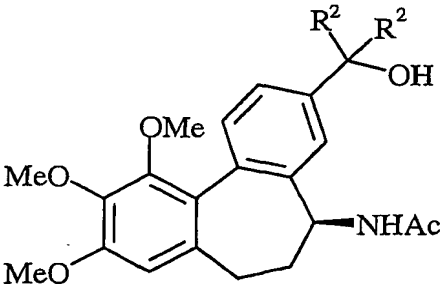
from an allocolchicine or an ester derivative thereof of formula (I):



(I)

wherein R^1 is hydrogen, C_{1-6}alkyl or aryl; which comprises:

a) reacting said allocolchicine or an ester derivative thereof of formula (I) with a suitable organometallic reagent and / or a suitable reducing agent; in one or more ethereal solvents to form ZD6126 Alcohol of formula (II):



(II)

wherein R^2 is hydrogen, C_{1-4}alkyl or aryl; and

b) reacting ZD6126 Alcohol of formula (II) with an acid catalyst and an oxidising agent.

7. A process according to claim 6 wherein R^1 is C_{1-4}alkyl or aryl.

8. A process according to claim 6 wherein in step a) of the process the allocolchicine or an ester derivative thereof of formula **(I)** is reacted with a suitable organometallic reagent and wherein R^1 is C_{1-4}alkyl or aryl.

9. A process according to any one of claims 6 to 8 wherein the organometallic reagent in step a) of the process is selected from a compound of the formula R^2-X, wherein R^2 is as defined claim 6 and X is a magnesium halide or lithium.

10. A process according to any one of claims 6 to 8 wherein the organometallic reagent in step a) is methyllithium.

11. A process according to any one of claims 6 to 10 wherein the one or more etheral solvents is selected from tetrahydrofuran, diethyl ether, diethoxymethane, 2-ethoxyethylether, 2-methoxyethyl ether and dimethoxy ethane, or a mixture of one or more of said solvents.

12. A process any one of claims 6 to 11 wherein in step a) the allocolchicine or an ester derivative thereof of formula **(I)** is added to a reaction mixture comprising the organometallic reagent.

13. A process according to claim 12 wherein the organometallic reagent is methyllithium.

14. A process according to any one of claims 6 to 13 wherein the acid catalyst in step b) is a sulfonic acid.

15. A process according to claim 14 wherein the acid catalyst in step b) is methanesulfonic acid.

16. A process according to any one of claims 6 to 15 wherein in step b) of the process is carried out in the presence of a solvent selected from an aromatic solvent, an ester and an ether.

17. A process according to any one of claims 6 to 15 wherein in step b) of the process is carried out in the presence of an aromatic solvent selected from toluene and chlorobenzene, or a mixture of two or more of said solvents.

18. A process according to any one of claims 6 to 17 wherein, the process is effected in one stage, without isolation of ZD6126 Alcohol of formula (**II**).

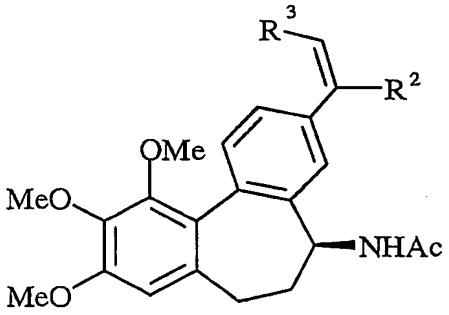
19. A process according to any one of claims 6 to 18 wherein R^1 is C_{1-4}alkyl.

20. A ZD6126 Alcohol of formula (**II**) as defined in Claim 1, with the proviso that R^2 cannot both be methyl or both be hydrogen.

21. A process for the preparation of a ZD6126 Alcohol of the formula (**II**) as defined in claim 6 which comprises reacting allocolchicine or an ester derivative thereof the formula (**I**) as defined in claim 6 with a suitable organometallic reagent and/or suitable reducing agent in one or more ethereal solvents.

22. Use of a ZD6126 Alcohol of formula (**II**) as defined in claim 1 in a process for the preparation of ZD6126 Phenol.

23. A ZD6126 Alkene of formula (**III**):



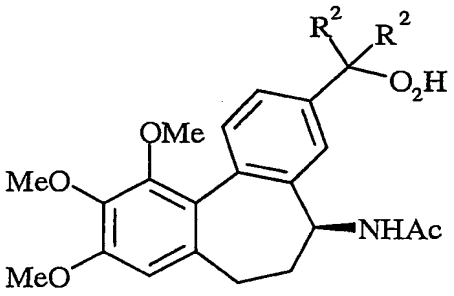
(**III**)

wherein R^2 is hydrogen, C_{1-4}alkyl or aryl and R^3 is hydrogen or C_{1-3}alkyl.

24. A process for the preparation of ZD6126 Alkene of formula **(III)** as defined in claim 23 which comprises reacting a ZD6126 Alcohol of the formula **(II)** as defined in claim 1 wherein at least one R^2 group is C_{1-4}alkyl, with an acid catalyst.

25. A process for the preparation of a ZD6126 Phenol which comprises reacting a ZD6126 Alkene of formula **(III)** as defined in claim 23 with an acid catalyst and an oxidising agent.

26. A ZD6126 Hydroperoxide of formula **(IV)**:



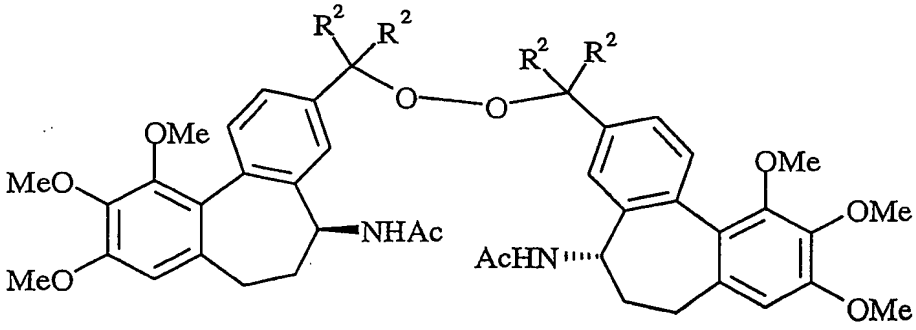
(IV)

wherein R^2 are each independently hydrogen, C_{1-4}alkyl or aryl.

27. A process for the preparation of a ZD6126 Hydroperoxide of formula **(IV)** as defined in claim 26 which comprises reacting a ZD6126 Alcohol of the formula **(II)** as defined in claim 1 with an acid catalyst and oxidising agent.

28. A process for the preparation of ZD6126 Phenol which comprises reacting a ZD6126 Hydroperoxide of formula **(IV)** as defined in claim 26 with an acid catalyst.

29. A ZD6126 Reactive Dimer of formula **(V)**:



(V)

wherein R^2 are each independently hydrogen, C_{1-4}alkyl or aryl.